After all this year has shown us, The Union for Contemporary Art is more committed than ever to our belief in the power of art to build vital community across barriers of all kinds. Throughout this season of distance, we’ve continued to innovate new ways of serving our mission, through our Radical HeARTS initiatives and more.

We would never have made it through this year – creating so many moments of surprising joy and closeness despite our separation – without our supporters! The Union is so proud of the community of artists and changemakers we’ve been able to foster through your support.

2020 has tested our collective limits in so many ways, but as a Union family, we are left with more energy and passion for our mission than ever before. With your help, we can continue to evolve our efforts and embrace all that 2021 (our 10th year!!) might ask of us.

Thank you to everyone who joined us though this year like no other, as we continued to pursue new paths forward, bringing artists & communities together to manifest real and positive change.

THANK YOU!

Brigitte McQueen
Union Founder + Executive Director
Recognizing that moments of crisis demand radical action, when The Union closed our doors for social distancing in March of 2020, we fully reimagined our programming and public offerings while our community weathered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We named the initiative Radical HeARTS – understanding that in these unusual times, in order to truly achieve our mission of “strengthen[ing] the cultural and social landscape of our community,” nothing less than an effort of radical transformation and unflinching compassion was required.

Throughout 2020, we redirected our organizational efforts toward new direct and meaningful actions that sought to help alleviate the ongoing effects of the COVID crisis in our North Omaha community and beyond.
Following the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota and James Scurlock here in Omaha, members of The Union’s Co-Op Studios team screen-printed a few “Black Lives Matter” posters in our Print Shop. Very quickly, we received several requests from people around Omaha who wanted to display solidarity in the windows of their homes and businesses. Through the first half of June we printed as many posters as possible to keep up with growing demand.

While demand for the posters seemed to be endless, we concluded the project on June 17 after distributing more than 3,000 posters. Our Executive Director Brigitte McQueen noted at the time:

“It’s been encouraging to see so many people eager to affirm the value and dignity of Black lives by placing this message in their homes, churches, and businesses. The whole experience (which none of us ever imagined would become such an ‘experience’) has also given our organization reason to pause, look within, and fully acknowledge that three words on a poster can only ever scratch the surface of the labor that MUST be done before Black lives fully, finally matter in this country. I am asking you to stand with my Union family and invest yourself in helping us do the vital work that needs to be moved forward. Our actions need to fall in line with our words, which demands that each of us interrogate ALL the places white supremacy is manifest in our society and ourSELVES, and with every bit of wisdom and grace we can gather . . . banish it forever.”

Though we shared all the posters for free, so many generous people were compelled to donate to The Union in support of the effort. Every dollar donated was used to present our Uplift + Elevate exhibition series in the fall of 2020.
Launched in 2020, Populus Fund is a new regranting initiative organized by The Union, through the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in order to support innovative artist projects throughout Omaha–Lincoln metros. Populus Fund was founded to provide essential support for projects that expand our understanding of how art exists in the world, address community needs, and exemplify new ways of working in, for, and with the public.

In 2020, in the midst of multiple pandemics, many artists were in need of critical financial support. Populus Fund’s inaugural grants were designated as unrestricted emergency funds to support vital needs such as medical bills, rent, debts, and food. The fund awarded ninety-six $1,000 grants using a weighted lottery system for a total of $96,000 awarded to Omaha-area artists by the end of 2020.

$96,000 In COVID-19 emergency grants distributed to local artists
When COVID hit, we knew our free-pick community garden would be central to our Radical HeARTS initiatives, offering direct support to our community during this time of illness.

To maintain safe distancing, we moved to a drive-thru pick up model this year. Union team members and many amazing volunteers harvested, prepared, and packaged produce that we shared from our drive-thru parking lot produce stand all summer into fall.

We’re so thankful for our ongoing partnership with The Big Garden who provided us with plants this year, and also to Sacred Seed Pop-Up and No More Empty Pots for sharing produce and supporting our efforts this year!!

Abundance Garden

721 Pounds of fresh Abundance Garden produce shared for free with our community
In 2020, the Exhibition program innovated the ways in which we’re able to present new work to audiences. Over the summer, as part of The Union’s Pride celebrations we partnered with two Omaha-based culture workers – artist Tiana Conyers and curator Ang R Bennett – in the creation of five billboards, featuring LGBTQIA2S+ people of color from Omaha. The project, titled *We Thrive in Middle Spaces* was supported by the Equality Fund through Omaha Community Foundation.

In the fall, the Uplift & Elevate exhibition series presented the work of local and regional Black artists in non-traditional settings while our Wanda D. Ewing Gallery remained closed for social distancing.

100% of the funds used to support all artists contributing to Uplift & Elevate were sourced through public donations made during The Union’s Black Lives Matter poster printing initiative in June 2020.
In order to stay connected with the dozens of young people enrolled in Union programming and their families, in 2020 our Youth Engagement program pivoted to creating over 1,000 Art + Life Kits. Distributed bi-weekly throughout the year, these kits provided artmaking materials and creativity prompts plus healthy food and snacks to be enjoyed by the whole family.

We also stayed connected through virtual engagements all year, bringing teaching artists and young creatives together so they could keep learning while distanced.
Performing Arts

While our theater was closed for most of the year for social distancing, we were thrilled to host UNO Theater for a collaborative production of Blood at the Root in February and March.

Like so many theaters around the world, ours went dark when the pandemic hit. For the rest of the year, the Performing Arts program turned its energy to the development of new work by Omaha-area theater practitioners. Union Producing Artistic Director or Theatre Denise Chapman collaborated with Performing Arts Collective member Eric Lawson in writing and workshopping his new musical Fry Daddies. We also began the planning process for an innovative new theatrical experience that would materialize as Pursuing Legacy in 2021.

52 hours invested in workshopping, rehearsing, & recording the new musical, Fry Daddies, by Eric Lawson
The 2020 Inside/Outside Fellows made amazing strides and creative developments out of this very unexpected year. With talents ranging from photography and painting, to fashion design and dance performance - this year’s cohort each found individually innovative ways to reach their audiences, foster community, and broaden their talents!

2020 FELLOWSHIP COHORT

Allegra Hangen - Photography Videography, & Multimedia
Michael Elizabeth Johnson - Interdisciplinary
Alajia McKizia - Multimedia and Performance
DeAndre Rhodes - Photography and Videography
Patty Talbert - Painting and Multimedia

Inside/Outside Fellowship
While our building was closed we had to get especially creative to find new ways of supporting Co-Op members who rely on the resources and equipment found in our five art-making studios. One solution was the Distanced Membership initiative. We kept the kilns hot for firing work that ceramicists were making at home. And in the Print Shop, we burned fresh screens for printmakers.

We also started the “Open Studio” web series, featuring several local artists in conversation (over Zoom), showing off their home studios and discussing how the pandemic and social distancing were impacting their creative work. It was an inspiring look into the lives of artists who were finding solace in their work, and was also a fun way to stay connected while we were apart.
Income & Expenditures

Financials reported in our annual report are calculated on a cash basis, reflecting income and expenses exchanged within the fiscal year.

**CONTRIBUTED SUPPORT**

- Foundations: $590,000
- Government Grants: $407,641
- Individuals: $260,177
- Corporations: $23,603

**TOTAL**: $1,281,421

**EARNED REVENUE**

- Program Fees: $7,844
- Membership Dues: $1,236
- Product Sales: $1,220
- Other: $213

**TOTAL**: $10,512

**EXPENDITURES**

- General Programs & Projects: $939,402
- Fundraising: $123,844
- Populus Fund: $104,846
- General Operating & Administration: $42,185

**TOTAL EXPENSES**: $1,210,277

**TO NET ASSETS**: -$81,656

**TOTAL INCOME**: $1,210,277
Supporters

$20,000+
Anonymous
Richard Brooke Foundation
Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund
Holland Foundation
Peter Kiewit Foundation
Lozier Foundation
Mid-America Arts Alliance
National Endowment for the Arts
The NBK Foundation
Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment
North Omaha Turn-Back Tax Historical Grant
Omaha Community Foundation
The Sherwood Foundation
Fred and Eve Simon Charitable Foundation
The Sherwood Foundation
Visual Arts
Peter Kiewit Foundation
The NBK Foundation
Holland Foundation
Improvement Fund
Douglas County Visitor Foundation
The Phillip and Terri Schrager Nebraska Civic Engagement Table
Cindy and Scott Heider
Giger Foundation
Elouise Ewing
Jeri and Tom Dollison
Jacque and Adam Christensen
Kali Baker Memorial Fund
Jessica Benjamin
Natalie Bassett
Carl Ashford
Luke Armstrong
Colleen and Darin Anthony
Anonymous
John Amdor
Steve McQueen and Janet Abbo
Suzy Henningsen
Kasey Hesse
Shan Hofschrue
Laura Hensley
Tressa Hoover
Jaci House
Donna Huber
Hutch, Inc.

$19,999 to $10,000
Nebraska Civic Engagement Table
The Phillip and Terri Schrager Foundation
Bill and Ruth Scott
Katie Weitz, PhD and Tim Wilson

$9,999 to $2,500
Karen and Taylor Borchert
Claire M Hubbard Foundation
Humanities Nebraska
Lincoln Financial Foundation, Inc.
Kevin McCarthy
Michael and Nancy McCarthy
Muhlhall’s
Mutual of Omaha Foundation
Lindsey Scott
Emily Sommer
Julie Volk
Wells Fargo Foundation

$2,499 to $1,000
Niki’s
Jacque and Adam Christensen
Jeni and Tom Dollison
Elouise Ewing
Giger Foundation
Cindy and Scott Heider
Bill and Stacia Hoover
Andrea Kathol
Leadership Omaha Giving Circle
Susan and Mike Lebenthal
Jaye Lund
Made in Omaha
Bruce and Lisa Moritz
Amy Nelson
Murray and Sharee Newman
Rape Family Foundation
Richard and Mary Parrish
Robin Pierson Barber
Women’s Fund of Omaha

$999 to $500
Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture
Nick Allmaker
Dundee Bank
Bluestem Prairie Foundation
Ann and Jim Carroll
Amy Ditomio
Adrian Duran and Alexandra Cardon
Max and Beth Engel
Randy and Beverly Greer
Vic Gutman & Associates
John and Wende Kotouc
Jim and Diny Landen
Jessica McKey
Othello and Tulani Meadows
Vera Mercer
Judith Pearl-Lee
Patricia and Thomas Peterson
Kristin and Mark Pluehacek
Luke and Autumn Pruitt
Pegeen Reilly
Jeffrey J. Schrager and Anne S. York
Family Foundation
Sumana Sermschobel and Caleb Seavey
Lauren Simpson
Sue and Mary Stroesser
Kale Zicafoose and Tyler Pain

$499 to $100
Susan A
Steve McQueen and Janet Abbo
John Amidor
Anonymous
Colleen and Darin Anthony
Luke Armstrong
Carl Ashford
Conrad Barber
Allie Barnhart
Natalie Bassett
Jessica Benjamin
Lori Benton
Laura Berman
Karen Berry and John Pollack
Jenni Borchert
Maureen and Nicholas Borman
Tokey Boswell
Eric Bowman
Christian and Carol Burk
Julia Buskirk
Celeste Butler
Patricia Carter
Kyle and Koreen Cartwright
Christian and Debra Christensen
Erin and Dan Cihal
Melanie and Fred Clark
Krista Clegar
Tiffany Clifton
Erika and Colin Conces
Carmelita Cox
Dave Crane
Patricia Cusil
Lesa Crockett
Bob Culver
Drew Davies
Bradley Davis
Molly Deacon
Michelle Elson-Roza
Corina Figueroa
Devin Fox
Kathleen Gallagher
Carol Gilbert
Sarah and Dan Gilbert
David Goldner
Donald Goldstein
Suzanne Grandinetti
Kimberly Grassmeyer
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Dan Crane and Megan Green
Jennifer Green
Mike and Kathy Gross
Brian Cuehring
Anne Guinan
Thomas Guttermann
Howard and Carol Hahn
Amy Haney
Jason Helvey
Ann and Gary Henningsen
Kasey Hesse
Shan Hofschrue
Hopper Dental
Tressa Hoover
Jaci House
Donna Huber
Hutch, Inc.

List includes 2020 contributions. For corrections, please email caitlin@u-ca.org.
People & Partners

UNION STAFF
Denise Chapman | Producing Artistic Director, Theatre
Tia Dawson | Administrative Assistant
Jessica Freeman | Youth Studios Assistant
Dan Crane | Print + Design Manager
Kat Fackler | Events + Project Manager
Sarah Jones | Co-Op Studios Manager
Megan King | Manager of Foundation + Corporate Relations
Caitlin LaVelle | Manager of Individual Giving + Stewardship
Mary Lawson | Program Coordinator
Joey Lynch | Director of Facilities + Sustainability
Patrick Mainelli | Communications Director
Brigitte McQueen | Founder + Executive Director
Paige Reitz | Deputy Director
Jacqueline Smith | Youth Studios Manager

2020 YOUTH TEACHING ARTISTS
When our building closed for COVID in March, The Union committed to continuing to pay the teaching artists we were working with through the end of their terms. In total, we provided nearly $13,000 in compensation to members of our creative community who were essential for facilitating our Youth Engagement program through this unusual year.

Angela Bennett
Teri Coolidge
Jessica Freeman
Cyrus Jefferson
Emily Mitchell
Liliana Monjarez-Falcon
Thalia Rodgers
Sarah Schneiderwind
Katie Schroeder
Tyler Swain
Cristina Victor
Thomas White
Samantha Zarders

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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Ali Maloy
Jessica McKay
Tulani Grundy Meadows
Amy Nelson
Jen Pavkov
Carol Russell
Susan Stroesser

2020 COMMUNITY PARTNERS
Bemis Center
Opera Omaha
No More Empty Pots
Girls Inc

OUR STELLAR VOLUNTEERS
Dundee Bank Staff Volunteers
RISE of Flywheel
UNITED ERG
Maureen Waldron
Bacchanalia. Soft sculpture collection by 2020 Union Fellow Michael Elizabeth Johnson.